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ABSTRACT

This report describes a preliminary attempt to explore and map the research information, products, and strategies with implications for educational policy. Since efforts were directed toward breadth rather than depth coverage, the results were more useful in identifying gaps than in analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the available materials. Future work is expected to include increased depth in specific topic areas. Included in the report are a taxonomy of knowledge synthesis documents and a matrix applying the taxonomy to topical areas in education. (STS)

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PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH AND POLICY INTERPRETATION PRODUCTS/STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED IN INITIAL SEARCH WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR DISSEMINATION/FEEDFORWARD SYSTEM

R&D Dissemination and Feedforward System

Phase I Subcontractor: Research and Policy Interpretations

Center for Educational Policy and Management

University of Oregon

Eugene, Oregon

December 10, 1976

IR005009

Preliminary Analysis of Available Research and Policy Interpretations Products and Strategies with Implications for the Dissemination/Feedforward System

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Under the general goal of the RP/Contractor to increase the number and quality of research-based policy decisions among educational practitioners and decision-makers, a search has been conducted to identify currently available materials to support this goal. Broadly defined, these materials were expected to include syntheses of research-based knowledge as well as products and strategies which provide a means of selecting from among alternatives (i.e., analyses of policy issues related to each alternative).

The objective of this search was to identify materials (1) that are directly usable by the decision-maker; that is, that lead the decision-maker through the decision process related to choosing among alternatives (i.e., alternatives to achieve school desegration); (2) that provide synthesis of information with respect to one alternative (i.e., busing to achieve school desegration); or (3) that provide a synthesis of research-based knowledge on a broad policy area (i.e., school desegration).

The objectives of this analysis of the materials found in the search are threefold:

1. To examine in general the strengths and weaknesses of the coverage provided by these materials. See framework for further discussion.

2. To identify gaps in the coverages. Gaps are defined as no coverage, very limited coverage of a "hot" issue area, or coverage which is primarily

"weak" in research-based knowledge even though there may be considerable material that is not research-based.

3. To suggest the implications that this preliminary analysis has for the work of the Research and Policy Interpretations Contractor and for the work of the Dissemination/Feedforward System as a whole.

Assumptions Underlying Search and Analysis

The work of the CEPM subcontract was begun with certain assumptions about the available materials and their impact upon rational decision-making.

1. Sufficient research-based knowledge already exists in many policy issue topic areas to provide useful information to decision-makers.

2. Syntheses of research-based knowledge in forms conducive to use by educational practitioners and decision-makers already exists in at least some policy issue topic areas.

3. The impact of research-based knowledge will be to effect increase in quality of policy decisions.

Limitations of Preliminary Analysis

Limited time and personnel for the CEPM Phase I work have led to limitations, both planned and methodological which may affect the adequacy of the work thus far for use by the System.

1. At the time the subcontract proposal for Phase I was submitted, the decision was made to limit the search and analysis to materials to be used at the elementary and secondary education level, as these levels seem to be the ultimate consumers of D/FF System products. However, this has eliminated consideration of policy issues at the Federal, State and Intermediate Service Agency levels; as well as materials for the Junior College level and University level, even though the latter would include teacher training materials. As

the client group for the D/FF System is the SEA and ISA level, some additional search activity, probably early in Phase II, may need to be carried out in policy areas identified as priority by these clients through the Regional Exchange.

2. The Search was limited to materials produced and/or used in the United States. This eliminated consideration of possibly useful materials from other countries, even as models for later development of materials in areas where gaps exist because the search strategy would not identify these.

3. The search was also limited to materials produced since January 1, 1970, thus eliminating many excellent materials produced prior to that date. We would expect, however, to consider search for such materials in areas of gaps in coverage as well as inclusion of materials from earlier dates identified "by accident" (i.e., in bibliographies of later materials or by citation of one of our consultants).

4. A methodological limitation of this preliminary analysis is the use of abstracts of the materials rather than the documents themselves. Although some materials are available to us, the majority have yet to be purchased and the preliminary analysis may reflect this lesser knowledge of the materials. Some sampling experience suggests that this limitation is in the direction of identifying fewer gaps and fewer weaknesses than may actually exist.

5. A further methodological limitation is the use of a document-based search. Although other types of communication (i.e., interpersonal) are included in written materials, not all of these may be included and thus gaps identified may be methodological rather than actual.

6. Another methodological limitation applies to the collection of documents representing products and strategies. The selection criteria reflect the framework discussed in the next section of this introduction.

Framework for Analysis

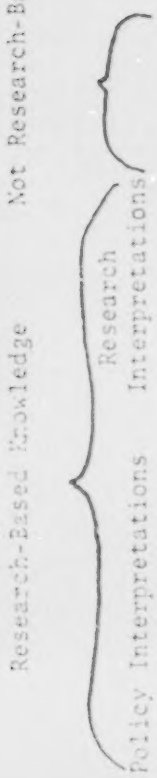
CEPM's original approach to identifying gaps and analyzing strengths and weaknesses was through the development of a conceptual framework. We saw this framework essentially as a taxonomy to classify the information synthesis/analysis needs of educational practitioners and decision-makers with regard to policy formation and policy decisions and ultimately to classify the materials identified relevant to these needs.

A review of the literature identified a number of frameworks and approaches to classification of educational needs, problems and policy information. We had expected to select one of these frameworks for use in the preliminary analysis. However, none of those identified appeared to suit the purposes of identifying strengths and weaknesses and gaps in the coverage. Informal consultation with other CEPM faculty confirmed our feeling that none of these was applicable even with some modification and led to a decision to use a different approach to development of a classification framework.

As we were developing the list of documents, we began to identify both categories of research-based knowledge based on descriptor terms and types of synthesis materials. The list of categories was developed to provide an earlier rough estimate of several possible gap areas so that we were able to focus a more intensive search in those areas.

The taxonomy of knowledge synthesis documents (Figure 1) was our attempt "in house" to understand the types of synthesis products we were identifying in terms of their usefulness to educational practitioners and decision-makers. Some background for construction of this framework came from Papier's paper, Approaches to Establishing Dimensions and Criteria for Evaluation of Review Publications as well as the conceptual mapping of educational products, programs, practices, knowledge and information from the DAG Report and other sources.

Figure 1: Taxonomy of
Knowledge Synthesis Documents



1. General Knowledge -- implicitly underlying research assumptions and educational policies
   a. Thompson's Cultural Factors*
   b. Philosophy of Education
   c. Thompsons's Structural Factors*

2. Knowledge Synthesis/Transformation
   a. Biblographies
   b. "State of the Art" Reviews
   c. Interpretative Reviews
   d. Analytic/Critical Reviews

3. Access to Alternatives
   a. Reports/Reviews listing policy alternatives
   b. Case studies of policy alternatives
   c. User evaluation reports

4. "Tools" to evaluate and select from among policy alternatives
   a. Documents/products
      1) Comparative analysis (i.e., analysis of policy issues in terms of each policy alternative)
      2) "if-than" statements
   b. Strategies
      1) Comparative analysis (i.e., analysis of policy issues in terms of each policy alternative)
      2) "if-than" statements

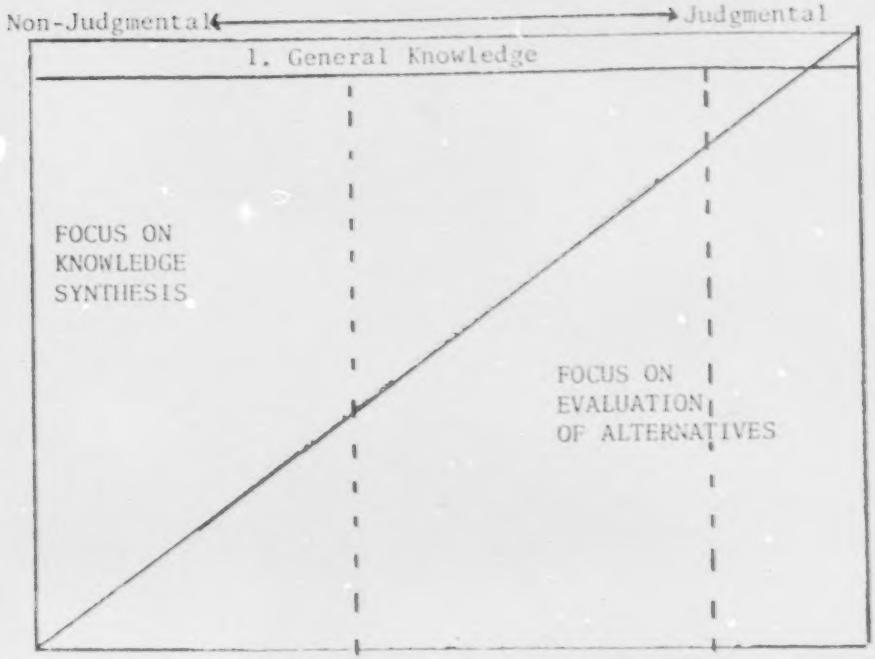
* John Thomas Thompson, Policymaking in American Education: A Framework for Analysis, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976, pp. 31 and 32.

We had used these in rough combination earlier to suggest again areas for more intensive search. Our experience with this suggested this framework as a useful tool. Independently, one of our "in-house" consultants suggested that this provided a more useful classification tool at this point than did other kinds of conceptual frameworks because this provides essentially a map of availability of knowledge syntheses and provides some indication of their application to the decision-making process in terms of choosing among alternatives.

The Model of this taxonomy illustrates its power to analyze available materials in terms of utility to decision-makers. Note the placement of the General Knowledge category indicating that these philosophical and cultural beliefs and assumptions influence educational research and policy interpretations. It is these beliefs and assumptions which make the American educational system different from that of any other country. Examples of such long-term factors are commitments to local control of education and to universal education. More recent factors are related to equal educational opportunity. Although research-based knowledge often exists concerning general knowledge factors, policy decisions were often implemented prior to the research and are sometimes mandated by law. Thus, research syntheses referring to these factors would be classified in Types 2 to 4 on the basis that these reflect implementation of the beliefs and assumptions and often represent alternative means of implementation.

Knowledge synthesis Types 2 to 4 indicate a continuum from the non-judgmental reporting of research results to the judgmental evaluation of alternatives to assist the decision-maker in choosing the alternative which best meets his particular needs and situational factors (Thompson, p. 32). A midway point on the continuum would be Type 3a., which provides a synthesis of research-based knowledge about several alternatives which have been tested;

Figure 2: Model of Taxonomy of Knowledge Synthesis Documents



2.
a. Listing of Relevant Research Reports
b. Synthesis of Research
c. Synthesis/Transformation (often targeted to specified audience)
d. Analytic/Critical synthesis/transformation

3.
a. Synthesis of data re. alternatives to inform decision-makers
b. Case studies of successful/unsuccessful use of alternatives
c. Reports/syntheses of reports of user evaluation of alternatives

4.
Analyses of policy issues related to each alternative
"If-than" statements

Research Interpretations — Policy Interpretations

or Type 3b., which presents case studies to illustrate the use of alternatives, frequently in conjunction with syntheses. Both types illustrate the alternatives and may include some indication of the implications of the research, but generally do not take the decision maker through the decision process.

This taxonomy/model views evaluation research as providing decision-oriented information primarily focused on evaluation of alternatives; i.e., Type 3c.

Types 2 and 3 are document-based knowledge products. Both written knowledge products and interpersonal communication strategies which focus on assisting decision-makers to select from among alternatives are classified in Type 4. Type 4 appears the appropriate classification for strategies such as interpersonal communication, traveling policy seminars or workshops as well as for written analyses which present essentially the same kind of information, but for a broader audience and at considerably less expense. Both Type 4 products and strategies probably require and draw from the knowledge synthesis and interpretation materials represented in Types 2 and 3.

As the function of research and policy interpretations is assumed to be assisting in making choices, we are able to analyze strengths and weaknesses of this map of availability according to the taxonomy model which illustrates the usefulness of the materials for this function.

Thus, a category of information which contained materials from the range of product/strategy types would have strong coverage. One in which coverage consisted only of bibliographies and of non-analytic synthesis documents (Type 2) would have weak coverage. A category with only one or two products/strategies in Type 4 might thus be considered to have strong coverage, although this determination would need to include a close examination of the products/strategies to apply such criteria as depth of research-based know-

ledge used, fairness and appropriateness of analyses, etc.

Use thus far indicates that it would be appropriate to continue work with this mapping framework, particularly in refining the categories used in this preliminary analysis and in delimiting treatment to policy issues rather than the broad approach used in this preliminary analysis.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS NARRATIVE

Search Strategy

The search strategy for RPI included perusal of the following sources.

1975 NIE catalogue

388 ERIC abstracts

Current Index of Journals in Education (CIJE)
for years 1972, 1975 and 1976 for categories:
Communications
Community education
Implementing government guidelines/regulations
Innovative implementation
Organization
Personnel evaluation
Special education
Auxiliary service
Student-related issues

U.S. Government Publications

Monographs

The limitations of that search (which is continuing) have already been identified in the introduction portion of this paper.

As a result of the search, a set of major categories and subcategories were developed (Figure 3). Perusal of those categories and the search findings gave some indication as to where gaps and weaknesses may occur. That activity resulted in nine categories and eight subcategories in which limited data appeared to be available. Those categories were:

Communications
  Cable TV, closed circuits re: instructional programs
Community education
Implementing government guidelines/regulations
Innovative implementation
  Choosing among alternatives
Personnel evaluation
  Administrator evaluation
  Auxiliary personnel evaluation
Special education

Auxiliary services
- Transportation
- Food services
- Laundry services
- Maintenance

Student-related issues
- Vandalism

Preliminary Analysis

Using the Taxonomy of Knowledge Synthesis Document as a backdrop for analyzing some of the findings of the partially completed search, this preliminary analysis will look briefly at the various kinds of documents related to specific topics. Further discussion regarding gaps, weaknesses and overlaps on specific topics will also occur. Type 1 (General Knowledge) will not be discussed here. Furthermore, the reader should keep in mind that clear distinctions are not always possible, particularly when unable to have access to the entire product or strategy. Although such distinctions may appear conceptually well-defined, often the literature is not planned or written in such a clear manner.

As noted above, after a preliminary search occurred, a number of topics were identified as possible areas where little data was available. Rather than discussing each type or each topic separately, this analysis will speak only to selected topics and to selected types.

Only a small number of bibliographies (2a) for any topic or related to any of the types were found. The lack of bibliographies may be due to an inadequacy of the search procedures in that many bibliographies representative of the research interpretations and useful to policy makers may be among the unpublished items that would not find their way even to a fugitive information system such as ERIC. One bibliography which appears to be representative of a research-based bibliography and also intended to be useful to educational policy makers has been prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on

Early Childhood Education. The biblography entitled Sex Role Development in Young Children: An Abstract Bibliography presents information about recent research reports and papers on sexism and sex role development.

Serving as an example of synthesis of data which presents alternatives (3a) is George H. Copa's "Policy Positions Affecting Vocational Education", Educational Forum, January 1976, pp. 169-178. His synthesis includes four papers formulated by a group outside vocational education but with related interests. The synthesis clearly outlines each of the papers and presents an analysis of the implications of each alternative presented. Another such synthesis is Philip K. Piele and John Stuart Hall's Budgets, Bonds and Ballots, which presents a translation of scholarly research about school finance elections.

Perhaps the most plentiful category is that of strategies which may have policy implications (4a) rather than interpretations. Many of the strategies, however, are developmental strategies that may not always have the strongest research base nor have undergone strenuous field-testing. One example of a strategy that has undergone field-testing, appears to meet most exemplary criteria, is the CSE Elementary School Evaluation Kit: Needs Assessment (1-6).

An example of Type 3c might be "Performance Contracting in the Elementary and Secondary Education: A Report Showing the Developments on a Nationwide Basis and the Implications for New York State." In addition to presenting a historical perspective, the report also includes an evaluative comment from Texarkana users and discussion about policy implications.

Harry Wolcott's "Social Organization and Educational Change: A Core Study" is among the best examples of Type 3b. Using an anthropological research model, Wolcott discusses a core study of the implementation of a Program Planning Budgeting System (PPBS) being piloted in a school district.

Gaps, Development Weaknesses

At this writing, it appears that the major gaps in topical areas are the following: student related issues, planning, implementing and evaluating auxiliary services, administrator evaluation, and implementing government guidelines. The gap areas are not necessarily the "hot" issues; however, several "hot" issues certainly could be considered under implementing government guidelines. One such example would be implementation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 503 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Furthermore, most of the limited but available data about issues of immediate interest is not research-based and usually not well-conceptualized.

An overabundance of curriculum strategies are available; however, most of them provide the reader/potential user with limited background data about the initial user group. Additional and detailed information would assist a potential user in determining if the experiences of the initial user group might be replicated in a slightly different setting. Presenting the strategy within a case study setting may alleviate this weakness.

Other examples of issues for which limited data of any type is available would be: small school related concerns, school closures due to finance problems, and mainstreaming.

A more comprehensive but less definitive analysis is provided in the accompanying Matrix of RPI and Taxonomy of Knowledge Synthesis Documents (see Figure 3).

	Research Interpretations				Policy Interpretations				
					Alternatives			Tools	
	RB	RSA	RIR	RA/CR	PAR	PACS	PUE	PD/P	PS
Administration of Schools		5			3	1	2		10
Administrator guides Administrative policy Educational administration Program administration School administration		2	3		1	1			8
Career Education Career choice Career opportunities Career planning Careers Occupational choice									
Classroom Management Class organization Classroom techniques Class management Classroom design Classrooms Class size Cluster grouping Discipline Flexible classrooms Flexible facilities Grouping (inst purposes) Management									1
Collective Bargaining Arbitration Collective negotiation Employer/employee rltnshp Employment problems Grievance procedures Negotiation agreements Negotiation impasses Professional negotiation Strikes Teacher militancy Teacher strikes Unions Wages								6	37
Communications -- Cable TV Closed circuit TV Communication networks Communication services Fixed service TV Information networks Mass media Telecommunication									

	Research Interpretations				Policy Interpretations				
					Alternatives			Tools	
	RB	RSA	RIR	RA/CR	PAR	PACS	PUE	PD/P	PS
Community Schools						4	3		16
Community									
Community school directors									
School community programs									
School community relationship									
Schools							1		1
Competency-based education			2		2				17
Decentralization									
Administrative organization									
Community control									
Decision Making									
Decision making skills									
Problem solving									
Productive thinking							1		3
Desegregation									
Integration litigation									
Integration methods									
Racial integration									
School integration									
Education	5	10	1		8	2	1		96
Academic education									
Art									
Bilingual									
Coeducation									
Community education									
Comparative education									
Compensatory education									
Cultural education									
Curriculum									
Early childhood education									
Environmental education									
Equal education									
Migrant education									
Nondiscriminatory education									
Rural education									
Educational counseling									
Discrimination									
Improvement									
Methods									
Needs									
Research									
Theories									
Educational Research	2	2	1						4

	Research Interpretations				Policy Interpretations				
					Alternatives			Tools	
	RB	RSA	RIR	RA/CR	PAR	PACS	PUE	PD/P	PS
Elementary Education									22
Elementary grades									
Elementary schools									
Elementary school students									
Elementary teachers									
Primary education						1			2
Equal Opportunity									
Affirmative action									
Civil rights									
Educational inequality									
Employment opportunities									
Equal employment									
Equal protection									
Equal educational opportunities									
Equality of education									
Job development									
Opportunities									2
Goal Development									
Educational objectives									
Goals									
Goal orientation									
Measurement goals									
Training objectives						1			3
Implementing Government Guidelines									
Civil rights legislation									
Discriminatory legislation									
Drug legislation									
Educational legislation									
Federal legislation									
Labor legislation									
Minimum wage legislation									
Recreation legislation									
State legislation									
Information Dissemination	3		2		5	1	4		4
Dissemination									
Information processing									
Diffusion									
Information networks									
Information science									
Information services									
Information systems									
Information theory									
Innovative Implementations		1			2	1	4		10
Building innovation									
Choice making among innovations									
Diffusion									
Educational innovation									
Instructional innovation									
Research									

	Research Interpretations				Policy Interpretations				
					Alternatives			Tools	
	RB	RSA	RIR	RA/CR	PAR	PACS	PUE	PD/P	PS
Inservice									
Administrative inservice					2		1		6
Inservice courses									
Inservice education									
Inservice programs									
Inservice teaching									
Inservice training									
Inservice teacher education									
Inservice teacher training									
Inservice education programs									
Teacher workshops	1						1		42
Language Skills									
Audiolingual skills									
Basic skills									
Expressive language									
Language ability									
Language proficiency									
Listening comprehension									
Speech skills									
Verbal ability									
Word study skills							1		9
Management Systems									
Critical path method									
Decision making									
Information systems									
Management development									
Management games									
Operations research									
Problem solving									
Systems analysis									
Systems approach									
Systems concepts									
Systems development		1			2	1	2		12
Multiculturalism									
Interracial primers									
Multiethnic primers									
Cultural interrelationships									
Integration methods									
Textbook bias									
Textbook content					1	1	2		3
Organization									
Administrative organization									
Bureaucracy									
Course organization									
Centralization									
Consortia									
Coordination									
Decentralization									
Faculty organization									
Grade organization									

	Research Interpretations				Policy Interpretations				
					Alternatives			Tools	
	RB	RSA	RIR	RA/CR	PAR	PACS	PUE	PD/P	PS
Organization (continued)									
Hierarchy		1			2	2	4		19
Horizontal organization									
Informal organization									
Mergers -- consolidation									
Organizational structure									
Organizations(groups)									
Pyramid									
Power structure									
Student organizations									
Vertical									
Personnel Evaluation									6
Administrator evaluation									
Counselor evaluation									
Employee evaluation									
Employment qualifications									
Evaluation									
Personnel									
Staff evaluation									
Teacher evaluation									
Worker evaluation									
Program Evaluation	1		2		6	2	6		22
Cost effectiveness									
Course evaluation									
Critical path method									
Curriculum evaluation									
Evaluation									
Faculty evaluation									
Program administration									
Program costs									
Program improvement									
Programs									
School surveys									
Reading									
Reading ability									
" achievement									
" centers									
" clinics									
" comprehension									
" consultants									
" development									
" diagnosis									
" difficulty									
" failure									
" games									
" habits									
" improvement									
" instruction									
" level									

(continued)

	Research Interpretations				Policy Interpretations				
					Alternatives			Tools	
	RB	RSA	RIR	RA/CR	PAR	PACS	PUE	PD/P	PS
eading (continued)									
Reading materials									
" materials selection									
" processes									
" programs									
Reading readiness									
" research									
" skills									
" speed									
" tests									
chool Finance									6
Budgets									
Budgeting									
Educational finance									
Educational support									
Educational vouchers									
Educational economics									
Finance									
School finance									
econdary Education					1				7
Secondary school education									
Secondary grades									
Secondary schools									
Secondary school students									
pecial Education			1		1		2		14
Deaf education									
Diagnostic teaching									
Exceptional child education									
Homebound									
Individual instruction									
Itinerant teachers									
Partially-sighted									
Regular class placement									
Special training									
Speech education									
Special classes									
Special education teachers									
Special programs									
Special schools									
Special services									
Talking books									
Teaching methods									
Special Funding									
Economic support									
Financing									
Fund raising									
School funds									
School support									

	Research Interpretations				Policy Interpretations				
					Alternatives			Tools	
	Bibli graphy	State of Art	Inter-pre tive	Analy-tic/ Crtcl	Reports	Case Studies	User Eval.	Docu-ments	Strategies
	RB	RSA	RIR	RA/CR	PAR	PACS	PUE	PD/P	PS
Student Personnel Services									
Counseling programs			1		1				2
Guidance programs									
Guidance services									
Pupil personnel programs									
Student personnel work									
Student personnel programs									
Student Problems									
Violence					1	1	1		1
Vandalism									
Vocational selection									
Student participation in school mgt.									
Teaching									
Teaching assignment		2	1						44
" assistants									
" benefits									
" conditions									
" experience									
" guides									
" load									
" machines									
" methods									
" models									
" procedures									
" programs									
" quality									
" skills									
" styles									
" techniques									
Transportation									
Busing									
Instructional trips									
School buses									
Student transportation									

*A large number of documents surveyed did not fit easily into the categories; therefore, they are not included here. Furthermore, in initially arranging the categories, we included items such as reading and classroom management; however, during further classification, little emphasis was given to them; thus, the reader will note blanks for those categories. In addition, the reader will note a large number of documents categorized as policy strategies. This may be somewhat misleading in that many categorized are strategies with policy implications; however, most do not include implimentation statements in their presentations. Further refinement of the system may eliminate such hazy coverage.

IMPLICATIONS FOR D/FF SYSTEM

Conducting the analysis of the map of availability, and consideration of the strengths and weaknesses and the gaps in the knowledge base identified together with discussions among contractors at the system-wide meetings and with informal consultants at CEPM, provide the basis for a discussion of implications for the D/FF System. These implications fall into two general categories: (1) implications for the further work of the RPI contractor, (2) implications for consideration by the system as a whole.

Implications for work of the RPI Contractor

As has been stated in the limitations, this represents a preliminary analysis. Much of the time has been spent in "feeling our way" in a knowledge base largely unexplored by us. We feel that it was necessary to begin with a broad search to understand the extent of the territory. The knowledge territory is much larger than we had expected it to be. Our original intent to search as broadly as possible has resulted in breadth without depth of coverage given available time and funds. We now feel that such an approach, although useful in supplying background information, needs to be changed to provide the depth needed in providing a useful service to educational practitioners and decision makers. The implications below apply to this narrowing of focus.

1. The RPI Contractor needs a methodology for determining the areas upon which to focus our efforts immediately in building a collection of products and strategies and later for planning further work. We have assumed that the literature could provide some indication of priority areas; but we have no assurance that this is possible. In fact, we have some indication that the literature may be misleading in predicting "hot" issues or areas of need. Thus, we have no means at this stage for insuring that our choice would be the most

appropriate. The choice of focus is a currently vital issue as it was planned that selection criteria for the collection would reflect this narrowing of focus.

Recommendation

As the Regional Exchanges are also in a developmental stage and may have neither the time nor funds to obtain information for us from their consumer groups, CEPM would conduct a limited interpersonal survey of some intermediate service agency persons (essentially as consultants to the RPI contractor) to discuss some areas most appropriate for intensive study.

2. The taxonomy of knowledge synthesis appears a useful classification scheme and will receive further refinement. We feel that effort in this direction is possibly more useful and feasible than continued work on a conceptual framework relating research and policy applications. Recent acquisitions, too late for incorporation in this analysis, offer some further insights and possible directions.

3. Narrowing of RPI Contractor focus involves another kind of implication which has been cited at system meetings: division of domain between RPI contractor and Consumer Information contractor, included avoidance of unnecessary duplication and overlap (we expect some overlap may be necessary and desirable). The framework we have used for analysis offers some possible approaches which might be considered:

a. Assigment of topic areas (i.e., curricular areas to CIC; non-curricular areas to RPIC).

b. Focus of consideration of RPIC on collection/development of Type 4 products/strategies in non-curricular areas. The CIC could use any synthesis materials of assistance to providing consumer information. As a great deal of synthesis material is already available from the ERIC system, these would

not become the focus of either contractor in the D/FF System except as needed to provide background information to the development of Type 4 products/strategies (RPIC) or consumer information on alternative products/programs (CIC).

Note: As it is necessary to begin building our collection as soon as funds are received, CEPM has made a tentative decision (reflected in selection criteria) to concentrate on Type 4 products and strategies. A further search to identify relevant interpersonal strategies (from such sources as ACSA Project Leadership and AASA Academy).

4. Given the approval by the D/FF System of Implication 3 above, the CEPM subcontract faces a logistical problem: How does CEPM build a collection of Type 4 strategies? Although some presenter's guides are available, resources in this area are often persons, not documents. Our suggested resolution of this issue would be to increase the emphasis on Phase II planning to involve the delineation of some means of identifying and tapping human resources with knowledge on policy issues. Considerable emphasis in the first year of Phase II should be on the development of strategies to deliver these resources when they are needed. The collection might then include audio-visual materials and an active file of human resources as well as an appropriate document base.

Implications for the work of the System

1. The great need appears to be a means of identification of information needs of potential consumers, both in terms of categories and of information types for two reasons: (1) "cost effective" use of limited D/FF resources, and (2) response to client needs. If the D/FF System is to be "user-driven", then it is currently without a driver. Without such a driver, the system may be directionless and may be unable to determine a direction. This argues strongly for the development of strategies to provide the user driver's input now rather at some time in Phase II. This implication is particularly relevant to the

work of three national function contractors (RPI, Consumer Information, and Training for Dissemination and Utilization). We need the "intelligence" system suggested by the Data Management Contractor to avoid making inappropriate decisions about priority areas.

2. Related to this is the need to develop a predictive capability to identify in advance the likely "hot" issues so that we can respond to needs in time for our "products" to be useful. One of the difficulties the D/FF System faces is response time -- how quickly can we provide the needed response to a request in a form that is appropriate. Unless we can develop some predictive capability, the D/FF System is in danger of providing information on alternatives after the client has been forced to make a selection (analogous to the "Oh, I could have had a V-8" ad currently on television).

3. Lag time is of concern in another implication for the system: Although the emphasis is on research-based knowledge, this may not be adequate to meet some priority needs of clients. Evan if the system develops a highly effective predictive capability and the feedforward aspect is effective in influencing direction of research, the time lag for the production of research-based knowledge products would be at least three to five years. The indications are that research-based knowledge on recently emerging "hot" issues is available "by accident". And yet the administrator who faces the necessity of shutting schools because the budget didn't pass needs help today. How does the System respond to needs now, not next year when the research underway is published, or several years down the line when new research is finished. Because of the nature of our developmental philosophy of education and changing cultural and structural factors, we can expect the nature of requests to the system to require immediate response, not necessarily confined to research-based knowledge.

Although this implication may have more relevance to the kinds of consid-

erations more the domain of the RPI contractor, we would expect similar problems among other contractors.

Recommendations

This seems an area for tapping user-initiated practices for coping and knowledge "in the heads" of practitioners. The System, perhaps under the direction of the RPI Contractor, needs to develop strategies for extracting these practices and pieces of knowledge, for making them transportable, and for disseminating them. In addition work should be done in developing a means of selecting those which might be appropriately feed forward for research and development activities.

CONCLUSION

This is a preliminary analysis of strengths, weaknesses and gaps in available information products/strategies in research and policy interpretations. It represents the results of a very broad search strategy, the purpose of which was to explore and map the research knowledge available to educational practitioners and decision-makers.

The map of availability produced is somewhat analogous to a satellite picture of the earth from a hundred miles out: it illustrates the shape of the territory without distinguishing the features. Thus, our map is perhaps more useful in identifying gaps than in analyzing strengths and weaknesses of the available materials. This is a limitation we had expected in our original proposal, and we also expect the final analysis to concentrate more upon analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the products/strategies which form the CEPM collection. In this way, the analysis is a complementary process producing a map of broad availability supplemented by typographical maps of smaller areas within the broad territory.

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